

REMARKS

Claims remaining in the present application are Claims 1-28. Claims 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, and 15 have been amended. No new matter has been added as a result of these amendments.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. §102

In the third paragraph of the Office Action, Claims 1-8 and 12-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Morgenthaler, U.S. Pat. No. 6,310,609 (hereinafter Morgenthaler). The rejection is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-8 and 12-13 are neither taught nor suggested by Morgenthaler.

Currently amended independent Claim 1 recites:

A palmtop computer system comprising a processor, a memory unit, and a plurality of illuminatable hard buttons controlled by said processor, wherein a plurality of functions are associated with each of said hard buttons, said memory unit coupled to said processor and including instructions that, when executed by said processor, selectively illuminate a particular hard button of said hard buttons to convey information to a user regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said particular hard button and wherein selectively illuminating said particular hard button provides information regarding said event.

Claim 1 recites that “a plurality of functions are associated with each of said hard buttons.”

Claim 1 further recites that a particular hard button is selectively illuminated “to convey information to a user regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said particular hard button and wherein selectively illuminating said particular hard button provides information regarding said event.” The cited reference fails to teach or suggest these claimed limitations.

For the purposes of illustrating the limitation “a plurality of functions are associated with each of said hard buttons” of Claim 1, assume there are hard buttons, such as hard buttons “A,” “B,” and “C,” and functions, such as “a1,” “a2,” “a3,” “b1,” “b2,” “c1,” “c2,” “c3,” so that a plurality of functions, such as “a1,” “a2,” “a3,” may be associated

with a hard button, such as “A”, a plurality of functions, such as “b1,” “b2” may be associated with a hard button, such as “B,” and a plurality of functions, such as “c1,” “c2,” “c3” may be associated with a hard button, such as “C.”

For the purposes of illustrating the limitation that a particular hard button is selectively illuminated “to convey information to a user regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said particular hard button and wherein selectively illuminating said particular hard button provides information regarding said event,” of Claim 1, assume an event “E1” is associated with a hard button, such as “B.” When the event “E1” occurs, the hard button “B” is selectively illuminated to convey information to a user in response to the occurrence of the event “E1.”

In contrast, Morgenthaler teaches in the abstract that, “The user interface includes a means for identifying the appropriate keys on the keypad which correspond to the step or steps required to activate a desired operation to be performed within the device.” Further in the abstract, Morgenthaler teaches, “...highlighting the keys to be pressed for operation of the desired function.” Similarly, at Col. 5, lines 42-47, Morgenthaler teaches,

By illuminating only those keys which provide valid responses for any given operation, the operator is guided through the proper operation of the telephone without referring to the written manual or user’s guide.

Note, Morgenthaler teaches associating one function with each key (e.g., the function that is performed when the user presses an individual key) and entering a mode that highlights keys to let a user know which keys may be pressed next. For example, Morgenthaler teaches keys, such as “A,” “B,” and “C,” but only one function is associated with each of those keys so that key “A” has one associated function, such as “a1,” key “B” has one associated function, such as “b1,” and key “C” has one associated function, such as “c1”. Function “a1” is performed when key “A” is pressed, function “b1” is performed when key “B” is pressed, function “c1” is performed when key “C” is

pressed. Further, if the user presses a key, such as “A,” then key “C” will be highlighted provided that pressing key “C” would be the appropriate next step after the user pressed key “A.”

Thus, Morgenthaler does not teach or suggestion associating “a plurality of functions...with each of said hard buttons” let alone selectively illuminating a particular hard button “to convey information to a user regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said particular hard button and wherein selectively illuminating said particular hard button provides information regarding said event,” as Claim 1 recites.

For the foregoing rationale, the limitations of Claim 1 are neither taught nor suggested by Morgenthaler. As such, allowance of Claim 1 is respectfully solicited.

In addition claims that depend on Claim 1 recite features which separately make them patentable. For example, Claim 2 recites, “A palmtop computer system as described in Claim 1 wherein each of said hard buttons includes a contoured region in the shape of a symbol that represents a primary function that is performed when said hard button is pressed.” Morgenthaler does not teach or suggestion such a feature.

In yet another example, Claim 4 recites, “A palmtop computer system as described in Claim 1 wherein the illumination of said hard buttons is programmable.” In contrast, Morgenthaler teaches in the abstract, “The user interface includes a means for identifying the appropriate keys on the keypad which correspond to the step or steps required to activate a desired operation to be performed within the device.” Similarly, at Col. 5, lines 42-47, Morgenthaler teaches,

By illuminating only those keys which provide valid responses for any given operation, the operator is guided through the proper operation of the telephone without referring to the written manual or user's guide.

For example, as already stated, Morgenthaler teaches that if the user presses key "A," then key "C" will be highlighted provided that pressing key "C" would be the appropriate next step after the user pressed key "A." This is not programming the illumination of hard buttons, as recited by Claim 4.

Claims 2-5 depend on Claim 1, which is believed to be allowable for the foregoing rationale. As such, it is respectfully asserted that the rejections of Claims 2-5 have been overcome and their allowance is earnestly solicited.

Currently amended independent Claim 6 recites:

In a palmtop computer system, a method for conveying information to a user comprising the steps of:

- a) providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function;

- b) providing at least one light source, said light source located such that, when said light source is illuminated, light is emitted through said contoured region so as to illuminate said hard button; and

- c) selectively illuminating said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function.

Claim 6 recites "providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a "contoured region formed therein" that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function." Claim 6 further recites "selectively illuminating said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function."

Note, that Morgenthaler does not teach hard buttons having “contoured regions formed therein.” Although, the outer edges of Morgenthaler’s buttons 138, 140 cause the buttons 138, 140 to assume the shape of ovals and the outer edges of Morgenthaler’s buttons 136 cause the buttons 136 to assume the shape of arrows, Morgenthaler does not teach hard buttons having “contoured regions formed therein.” Therefore, Morgenthaler cannot teach or suggest the limitation, “providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function,” as Claim 6 recites.

Further as already discussed herein, Morgenthaler does not teach or suggest “selectively illuminating said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function,” as recited by Claim 6.

For the foregoing rationale, the limitations of Claim 6 are neither taught nor suggested by Morgenthaler. As such, allowance of Claim 6 is respectfully solicited.

In addition, claims that depend on Claim 6 recite features which separately make them patentable. For example, Claim 7 recites “wherein color of said light emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to said primary function.” Since Morgenthaler does not teach or suggest hard buttons having contoured regions formed therein, Morgenthaler cannot teach or suggest “wherein color of said light

emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to said primary function,” as recited by Claim 7.

In yet another example, Claim 8 recites “wherein color of said light emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to a secondary function.” Since Morgenthaler does not teach or suggest hard buttons having contoured regions formed therein, Morgenthaler cannot teach or suggest “wherein color of said light emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to a secondary function,” as recited by Claim 8.

Claims 7, 8 and 12-18 depend on Claim 6, which is believed to be allowable for the foregoing rationale. As such, it is respectfully asserted that the rejections of Claims 7, 8 and 12-18 have been overcome and their allowance is earnestly solicited.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. §103

In the fifth paragraph of the Office Action, Claims 9-10 and 14-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Detlef, U.S. Pat. No. 6,178,403 (hereinafter Detlef) in view of Chow, U.S. Pat. No. 6,339,374 (hereinafter Chow) and further in view of Morgenthaler. The rejection is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that Claims 9-10 and 14-28 are neither taught nor suggested by Detlef, Chow or Morgenthaler, alone or in combination.

Currently amended independent Claim 6 recites:

In a palmtop computer system, a method for conveying information to a user comprising the steps of:

a) providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function;

b) providing at least one light source, said light source located such that, when said light source is illuminated, light is emitted through said contoured region so as to illuminate said hard button; and

c) selectively illuminating said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function.

Claim 6 recites “providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function.” Further, Claim 6 recites “selectively illuminating said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function.”

Note, that Detlef does not teach hard buttons with contoured regions, therefore, Detlef does not teach or suggest the limitation, “providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function,” as Claim 6 recites.

Additionally, the Office Action dated October 21, 2003 and the Office Action dated March 4, 2004 both fail to recite a specific portion of Detlef that teaches or suggests the limitation of Claim 6 previously cited in this paragraph.

The Office Action does not state that Chow teaches hard buttons with contoured regions let alone teach or suggest the limitation, “providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function,” as Claim 6 recites. Therefore, Applicants respectfully agree with the Office Action that Chow does not teach or suggest

“providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function,” as Claim 6 recites.

Applicants respectfully agree with the Office Action’s statement that Detlef does not teach “that those conditions or events are conveyed to the user by means of illuminating related buttons,” and therefore does not teach or suggest “selectively illuminating said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function,” as Claim 6 recites.

The Office Action states that Chow teaches “a receiving indication apparatus for e-mail located in a computer keyboard wherein when the e-mail is arrived to the computer, a user is alerted by activating a light emitting diode (col. 2, lines 45-55). Thus, Chow teaches that the event occurred in the computer keyboard.” However, Applicant respectfully states that this is not “selectively illuminating said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function,” as recited by Claim 6.

Further, the cited combination also fails to teach or suggestion the limitations of Claim 6 because Morgenthaler fails to remedy the deficiencies in Detlef and Chow in that Morgenthaler fails to teach or suggest the limitations, “providing a hard button that is operable to perform a primary function, said hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said primary function,” and “selectively illuminating

said hard button to communicate information to a user of said palmtop computer system regarding and in response to the occurrence of a particular event that is associated with said hard button, wherein selectively illuminating said hard button provides information regarding said event to indicate that said hard button may be pressed to perform a function,”as Claim 6 recites.

For the foregoing rationale, the limitations of Claim 6 are neither taught nor suggested by Detlef, Chow, or Morgenthaler, alone or in combination.

In addition, claims that depend on Claim 6 recite features which separately make them patentable. For example, Claim 7 recites “wherein color of said light emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to said primary function.” Since Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest hard buttons having contoured regions formed therein, Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, cannot teach or suggest “wherein color of said light emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to said primary function,” as recited by Claim 7.

In yet another example, Claim 8 recites “wherein color of said light emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to a secondary function.” Since Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest hard buttons having contoured regions formed therein, Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, cannot teach or suggest “wherein color of said light emitted through said contoured region communicates further information to said user that relates to a secondary function,” as recited by Claim 8.

Claims 9-10 and 14-18 depend on Claim 6 and therefore include the limitations of Claim 6. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 9-10 and 14-18 are allowable for the same reasons that Claim 6 should be allowable. As such, allowance of Claims 9-10 and 14-18 is respectfully solicited.

Currently independent Claim 19 recites:

In a palmtop computer system, a method for conveying information to a user comprising the steps of:

- a) providing a first hard button that is operable to initiate operation of a date book application, said first hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said date book application;
- b) illuminating said contoured region of said first hard button when a date book alert occurs;
- c) providing a second hard button that is operable to initiate operation of an address book application, said second hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said address book publication;
- d) illuminating said contoured region of said second hard button when a call is missed;
- e) providing a third hard button that is operable to initiate operation of a to-do application that generates a to-do list, said third hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said to-do application; and
- f) illuminating said third hard button when a due date for an item on said to-do list has passed.

Claim 19 recites "providing a first hard button that is operable to initiate operation of a date book application, said first hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said date book application." Further Claim 19 recites illuminating particular hard buttons when an event, such as a date book alert occurs, a call is missed or a due date has passed.

Note, Detlef does not teach hard buttons that have contoured regions formed therein, let alone hard buttons that have contoured regions therein that are contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents a function, such as a date book application, an address book application, or a to-do list application. In fact, the Office Action does not even state that Detlef teaches or suggests hard buttons that have contoured regions formed therein. Thus, Detlef does not teach

or suggest the limitation, “providing a first hard button that is operable to initiate operation of a date book application, said first hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said date book,” as Claim 19 recites, let alone all of the other limitations that Claim 19 recites.

Further Detlef does not teach or suggest illuminating particular hard buttons when an event, such as a date book alert occurs, a call is missed or a due date has passed, as recited by Claim 19. In fact, the Office Action even states so in saying “Detlef does not teach that those conditions or events are conveyed to the user by means of illuminating related buttons.”

Further, the cited combination also fails to teach or suggestion the limitations of Claim 19 because Chow and Morgenthaler fail to remedy the deficiency in Detlef in that Chow and Morgenthaler fail to teach or suggest the limitation, “providing a first hard button that is operable to initiate operation of a date book application, said first hard button having a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said date book,” and illuminating particular hard buttons when an event, such as a date book alert occurs, a call is missed or a due date has passed, as Claim 19 recites, as well as all of the other limitations that Claim 19 recites.

For the foregoing rationale, the limitations of Claim 19 are neither taught nor suggested by Detlef, Chow, or Morgenthaler, alone or in combination.

In addition, claims that depend on Claim 19 recite features which separately make them patentable. For example, Claim 20 recites a fourth hard button that has “... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said memo application.” Since Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, do not teach or

suggest "... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol ...," as recited by Claim 19, Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, cannot teach or suggest a fourth hard button that has "... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said memo application," as recited by Claim 20.

In yet another example, Claim 22 recites a fifth hard button that has "... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said up application" and a sixth hard button that has "... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said down application." Since Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest "... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol ...," as recited by Claim 19, Detlef, Chow, and Morgenthaler, alone or in combination, cannot teach or suggest "... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said up application" and a sixth hard button that has "... a contoured region formed therein that is contoured in the shape of a symbol that represents said down application," as recited by Claim 22.

Claims 20-28 depend on Claim 19 and therefore include the limitations of Claim 19. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 20-28 are allowable for the same reasons that Claim 19 should be allowable. As such, allowance of Claims 20-28 is respectfully solicited.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above listed amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejected Claims is requested. Based on the amendments and arguments presented above, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-28 overcome the rejections of record. Therefore, allowance of Claims 1-28 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner have a question regarding the instant response, the Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

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